

Electronic Technology (ET) Project

Western Region WIC Electronic Technology Project

Background

The initiation for this project is based on our shared awareness that the millennium generation is engaged with the new wireless technology, especially social media, such as FaceBook, YouTube, instant messaging and texting, and we wanted to know if these trends include WIC participants. Since this generation expects to access programs and schedule appointments online, WIC Programs are rethinking how to reach WIC participants and how to design online programs to reach them in this new communication format

Key Partners and Stakeholders

USDA Western Region WIC Programs include Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Inter Tribal Counsel of Arizona, Inter-Tribal Counsel of Nevada, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Navajo Nation, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. Consultants are Altarum Institute, Amanda Hovis & Company, Limetree Research, Tim Hoerl, and Western Michigan University.

Goal

We wanted to discover innovative ways to serve the ever growing tech-savvy WIC participants and identify new online approaches to communicate with WIC participants.

Objectives

1. Conduct research of online communication tools used by WIC participants and their interest in online WIC services.
2. Evaluate the research, identify WIC participants preferred tools and WIC services.
3. Conduct strategic planning research and recommend an implementation plan.

Methods

In October, November and December 2011, the consultants conducted a total of 17 focus groups throughout the Western Region: 4 early adopters focus groups in California (1 Spanish and 3 English); 9 WIC participants focus groups: Washington (1 Spanish and 2 English), Oregon (2 English), Guam (1 English online), in Hawaii (2 English), Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (1 English), Arizona (1 Spanish), and Alaska (1 English online); and 2 future WIC families focus groups in Arizona. The early adopter focus groups were conducted in early October with the final report completed on December 13, 2011.

From November to December 9, 2011, every state and territory in the Western Region participated in the online survey.

Results

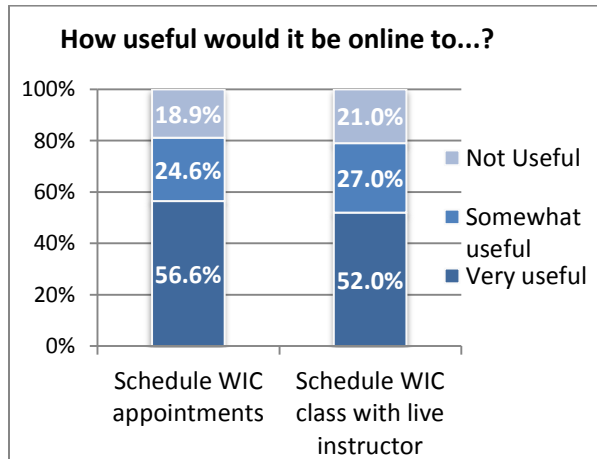
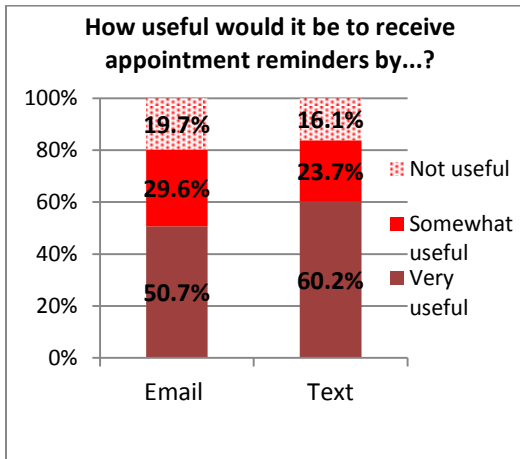
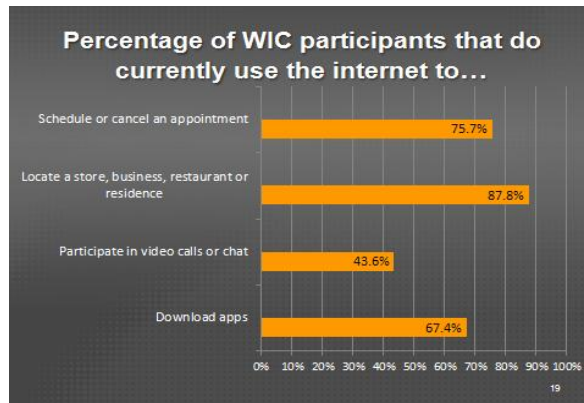
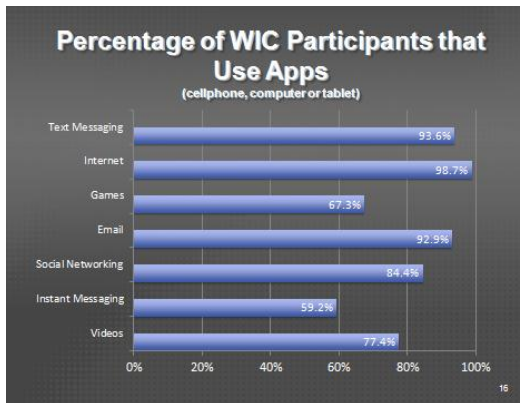
The results of the early adopter focus groups confirmed that WIC participants are engaged with the new wireless technology, especially social media and texting and are interested in online WIC services. Later on the WIC participant focus groups confirmed that most WIC participants are engaged with the new technology and part of the millennium generation trend.

A total of 8,144 WIC participants completed the survey and 640 of the surveys were completed in Spanish. 366 (4.6%) of the participants in the survey are 15-19 years of age; 5029 (63.9%) are 20-31 years of age or in the millennial generation, and 2476 (31.5%) are 32 or more years of age.

Electronic Technology (ET) Project

Survey results

- 92.5% (7518) own a cell phone.
- 79% (5918) have unlimited texting
- 54.6% (4088) have unlimited data plans
- 26.9% (2021) own a basic cell phone without a data plan



Summary

We confirmed WIC participant's use of online technology and applications and interested in connecting with WIC services online. Our next steps are strategic planning and implementation.

For more information contact: Barbara Longo at Barbara.Longo@cdph.ca.gov or Claudia Desmangles at Claudia.Desmangles@cdph.ca.gov or 916-928-8640.